INCOMING TELEGRAM Department of State POL 14 VIETS

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CONFIDENTIAL

Action SS Info

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RR RUEHC
DE RUMJIR 786#6192115Z
ZNY CCCCC
R 111105Z JUL 67
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC
INFO RUMTBK/AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
RUHHHQA/CINCPAC
RUMJFS/AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
STATE GRNC
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 786

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
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DECLASSIFIED ☑ RELEASABLE ☑
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PA or FOI EXEMPTIONS

LIMDIS

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

REF SAIGON 703

1. PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE HA THUC KY TOLD EMBOFF JULY 11 THAT HE VIEWED PROSPECT OF "BIG" MINH'S RETURN TO VIET NAM AS SERIOUS THREAT TO UNITY OF ARMED FORCES AND OPPORTUNITY FOR TRI QUANG BUDDHISTS TO FOMENT DISORDER. KY SAID HE DID

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NOT FEEL THAT MINH WOULD BE A SERIOUS THREAT AT THE POLLS IF HE WERE IN FACT ALLOWED TO RUN.

2. ASKED WHAT HE THOUGHT OUTCOME OF MINH'S APPLICATION FOR CANDIDACY WOULD BE, KY ANSWERED THAT THIS IS DIFFICULT TO PREDICT. NEITHER THE DIRECTORATE NOR THE ASSEMBLY REALLY WANTS TO BEAR RESPONSIBILITY FOR REJECTION OF MINH'S CANDIDACY, ALTHOUGH HE HAS HARDLY ANY SUPPORTERS IN EITHER GROUP. KY FORESAW POSSIBILITY OF ASSEMBLY'S ACCEPTANCE MINH'S CANDIDACY LEAVING QUESTION OF GRANTING OR DENYING HIM PERMISSION TO RETURN ENTIRELY UP TO DIRECTORATE.

3. HA THUC KY WAS OBVIOUSLY NOT UNHAPPY OVER LAST-MINUTE CANDIDACY OF AU TRUONG THANH. FROM KY'S POINT OF VIEW, IN THANH, TRAN VAN HUONG HAS NOT ONLY LOST AN EFFECTIVE ORGANIZER BUT GAINED AN OPPONENT LIKELY TO FURTHER SPLIT THE SOUTHERN VOTE. KY SPECULATED THAT THANH'S CANDIDACY WAS PROMPTED BY WORD THAT THE GVN MIGHT ARREST HIM FOR PRO-VC ACTIVITIES. BY QUICKLY FILING HIS CANDIDACY, THANH HAD

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SUCCEEDED, AT LEAST TEMPORARILY, IN WARDING OFF ARREST. KY SAID THERE WAS NO DOUBT THAT THANH MET FREQUENTLY WITH RECENTLY ARRESTED INDUSTRIALIST DINH XANG AND ENGINEER TRUONG NHU TANG. KY CHARACTERIZED ALL THREE AS "EXTREME LEFTISTS".

4. HA THUC KY HAD COMMENTS WITH RESPECT TO THIEU/KY SLATE SIMILAR TO THOSE MADE BY TRAN VAN HUONG TO EMBOFF DAY BEFORE (REFTEL). HE DOES NOT BELIEVE THAT PM KY WILL WHOLE-HEARTEDLY SUPPORT THIEU'S CAMPAIGN AND HAS HEARD REPORTS THAT KY'S CAMPAIGN MACHINERY MIGHT BE THROWN BEHIND PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDACY OF NGUYEN DINH LUYEN.

5. COMMENT: KY'S VIEWS ON LIKELY EFFECT OF GENERAL MINH'S RETURN MUST BE VIEWED IN CONTEXT OF DEEP ANIMOSITY IN CENTRAL VIET NAM BETWEEN KY'S OWN ORGANIZATION, THE REVOLUTIONARY DAI VIET PARTY, AND FOLLOWERS OF TRI QUANG, TO WHOSE ADVANTAGE MINH'S RETURN LIKELY TO ACCRUE. KY'S VIEWS ARE NONETHELESS QUITE TYPICAL OF A NUMBER OF POLITICIANS HERE WHO SEE MINH

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AS A THREAT ALTHOUGH THEY ARE NOT NECESSARILY PREPARED TO BEAR RESPONSIBILITY FOR BANNING HIS RETURN OR REJECTING HIS CANDIDACY.

6. IT IS DIFFICULT TO TAKE SERIOUSLY RUMORS MENTIONED BY BOTH TRAN VAN HUONG AND HA THUC KY, THAT KY'S ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT MIGHT BE THROWN BEHIND NGUYEN DINH LUYEN. THIS KIND OF STORY PROBABLY BROUGHT TO OUR ATTENTION IN ATTEMPT TO CONVINCE US THAT KY AND THIEU REMAIN DEEPLY DIVIDED. SHOULD BE ADDED THAT CREDENTIALS OF LUYEN'S RUNNING MATE, JUDGE THOAN, HAVE BEEN CHALLENGED ON GROUNDS THAT HE ONCE HELD FRENCH CITIZENSHIP. IF COMPLAINT AGAINST THOAN SUSTAINED BY NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, THEN LUYEN WILL NOT EVEN BE IN RACE.

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